

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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EFOLLOWING TELEGRAM WAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO MADRAS,
AND CULCATT AND IS REPEATED TO YOU.

QUOTE:

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: MAHARASHTRA EXPANDED CABINET

1. ON AUGUST 2, TWENTY-EIGHT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS WERE SWORN IN TO
THE MAHARASHTRA CABINET BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MINISTERS TO
34 AND THE CHIEF MINISTER PAWAR SAID THERE WILL BE FURTHER
EXPANSION OF THE CABINET. THE PORTFOLIOS OF THE EXPANDED MINISTER
ARE YET TO BE ANNOUNCED.

2. CONTRARY TO MAHARASHTRA JANATA PRESIDENT S.M. JOSHI'S VIEW
THAT MERIT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS SHOULD BE GIVEN PRECEDENCE
IN THE FORMATION OF THE MINISTRY, PRAGMATISM PREVAILED IN THE
SELECTION OF THE CABINET. BALANCING OF DEVERSE INTERESTS,
REPRESENTED BY SIX MAJOR CONTITUENTS OF THE RULING PROGRESSIVE
DEMOCRATIC FRONT, TO STABILIZE THE FIRST EVER NON-CONGRESS
GOVERNMENT IN MAHARASHTRA OVERRULED ALL OTHER
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CONSIDERATIONS. REGIONALISM ALSO PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE
FORMATION OF THE NEW MINISTRY. WITH MINOR EXCEPTIONS,
THE ESTABLISHED PATTERN OF CABINET FORMATION IN
MAHARASHTRA, I.E. GIVING REPRESENTATION TO VARIOUS FACTIONS
CONSITUTING THE RULING ELITE AND TO WELLDEFINED
GOEGRAPHICAL REGIONS DOMINATED THE MINISTRY FORMATION.
PAWAR THUS ADHERED TO TRADITIONAL PRACTICE, THE SAFEST

COURSE FOR HIM CONSIDERING THE WIDELY DIVERSE GROUPS
COMPETING FOR PORTFOLIOS.

3. FORMER CONGRESSMEN OF ALL SHADES HAVE OVERWHELMING
MAJORITY IN THE NEW 34 MAN, TWO TIER MINISTRY. (THERE ARE
17 MINISTERS AND 17 MINISTERS OF STATE.) OF THE 34
MINISTERS 22 BELONG TO THIS CATEGORY (13 - MAHARASHTRA
PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS LEGISLATURE PARTY, 3 - REBEL
CONGRESS (I), 4 - FORMER CONGRESSMEN IN THE JANATA, ONE
EACH FROM MAHARASHTRA SOCIALIST CONGRESS AND FORMER
CONGRESS (O). THE 12 NON-CONGRESS MINISTERS BELONG TO THE
FORMER JANA SANGH (4), FORMER SOCIALIST PARTY (4), PWP (3),
AND FORMER BLD (1). BECAUSE MOST OF THE 22 FORMER CONGRESS
MEMBERS BELONG TO THE MARATHA CASTE OF WEALTHY FARMERS,
THE NEW MINISTRY REFLECTS THE SAME SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTERESTS
THAT HAVE ALWAYS PREDOMINATED IN MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENTS.

4. THE VARIOUS CONSTITUENTS OF PAWAR'S PROGRESSIVE
DEMOCRATIC FRONT ARE REPRESENTED IN THE MINISTRY AS
FOLLOWS: JANATA 14 (JANA SANGH 4, SOCIALIST PARTY 4,
CONGRESS (O) 1, BLD 1 AND FORMER CONGRESSMEN 4), MAHARASHTRA
PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS LEGISLATURE PARTY - PAWAR GROUP 13,
PWP 3, FORMER CONGRESS (I) 3 AND MAHARASHTRA SOCIALIST
CONGRESS 1. THE TWO FACTIONS OF THE RPI SUPPORTING THE
RULING COALITION ARE NOT REPRESENTED. THIS HAS DISAPPOINTED THE
HOPES OF SCHEDULED CASTES FOR LARGER REPRESENTATION IN
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THE NEW CABINET.

5. THE CABINET HAS TWO MUSLIMS, THREE SCHEDULED CASTE
MEMBERS, TWO WOMEN AND ONE EACH FROM GUJARATI AND SINDHI
COMMUNITIES, AGAIN FOLLOWING THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN. THE
INCLUSION OF TWO BRAHMINS (BOTH JANATA) IS A BREAK FROM THE
PAST AS THE OUTGOING MINISTRY HAD NONE FROM THIS COMMUNITY.

6. REGIONWISE, THE BREAKDOWN IS AS FOLLOWS: WESTERN
MAHARASHTRA 15, VIDARBHA 7, MARATHWADA 6, GREATER BOMBAY 4,
AND KONKAN 2. COMPARED TO THE PAST MINISTRIES THE URBAN
AREAS HAVE RECEIVED LARGER REPRESENTATION (6: GREATER
BOMBAY 4, AND POONA 2) IN THE NEW CABINET. THIS REFLECTS
THE JANATA'S LARGE URBAN CONSTITUENCY IN MAHARASHTRA.

7. IT IS ONLY WITH RESPECT TO AGE THAT THE PAWAR TEAM
CONSIDERABLY DIFFERS FROM ITS PREDECESSORS. NONE OF THE
34 MINISTERS IS BEYOND 60; THE OLDEST IS 58. NINE OF THE
34 MINISTERS, INCLUDING THE CHIEF MINISTER HIMSELF, ARE
BELOW 40.

8. ONLY EIGHT OF THE 34 MINISTERS HAVE HAD PAST MINISTERIAL

EXPERIENCE. OF THEM ONLY TWO--PAWAR HIMSELF AND FORMER
CHIEF MINISTER S.B. CHAVAN--HAVE HELD IMPORTANT
PORTFOLIOS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS. HOWEVER, THE
NEW TEAM HAS SEVERAL POLITICAL HEAVYWEIGHTS SUCH AS
U.L. PATIL, N.D. PATIL, SUNDARRAO SOLANKE AND S. VARDE
WHO WILL PROVIDE DEPTH AND EXPERIENCE FOR THE NEW
TEAM. MOST OBSERVERS IN BOMBAY BELIEVE THAT THE NEW
CABINET COMPARES FAVORABLY WITH ITS PREDECESSOR
IN TERMS OF THE PERSONAL QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS
OF ITS MEMBERS.
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